

ARIZONA

BINGO REVIEW



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How to Avoid Player Complaints

Occasionally we receive letters from players regarding the way games are being played. Here are a few pointers on how to conduct your games legally and avoid complaints.

Prior to beginning your occasion, the Supervisor must verify that all 75 bingo balls are present. This verification must take place in the presence of one or more bingo players. One way to do this is to place the bingo balls in numerical order on the master board and then announce that any player may come up to verify all the bingo balls are present and that none of them are crushed, cracked, or stuck together.

Prior to each game, the caller must announce the prize amount and the required winning pattern. If the prize amount is based on the number of cards sold, you may announce a minimum prize prior to starting the game. After determining the actual prize amount, make a second announcement with the actual prize amount. When announcing the required pattern, try to insure that all aspects of the required pattern are made known to the players. For example, if you require postage stamps or six packs to originate from a corner, announce it that way. If you announce "any regular bingo" but do not accept

a postage stamp as a regular bingo pattern, announce it.

The caller must close each game. Once you have verified a winner, the caller must announce it and ask if there are any others. After giving the players a reasonable amount of time in which to announce bingo, the caller must state the game is closed. Once the caller closes the game, no other winners are honored.

Each winning pattern must be verified in the presence of a disinterested player. Of course, we all know there is no such thing as a disinterested bingo player. What is meant is the worker must verify the card in the presence of a player who is not closely associated with the winner. This means that one of your workers should pick up the winning bingo card and take it to the next table, or several chairs from the hopeful winner, hold the bingo card where the disinterested player can see it and verify that the card has a winning pattern.

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New Bingo License

Most of you by now have received your new bingo license when you renewed this year. This license will only be issued when you renew each year or change managers.



You will no longer receive another license when you add or delete the name of your proceeds coordinator, supervisors, assistants, or change the dates or times of your games. You must still notify us when you add or delete anyone from these positions, cancel games or change the date or times of your games. Remember that you must still provide us an affidavit for each person you want to add to your license.

Insider Theft

No one wants to think about insider theft. This occurs when someone in a position of responsibility, someone you really trusted, suddenly starts stealing from you. Outside of the legislative intent to regulate bingo games, the bingo statutes and rules are also intended to protect you from unscrupulous people by establishing compliance safeguards. Don't wait until it's too late. If you suspect you are having this kind of problem, call us; we can help.

A New Workshop Format

In an effort to serve the needs of our licensees better, we are in the process of changing the format of the workshops. Sam Martin is preparing changes that focus on "How to Comply" issues for new licensees and the Class A licensees. We believe that due to the high turn-over of Class A licensee personnel, a workshop on basic compliance issues each year would benefit all new licensees and work as a refresher for Class A licensees. For any Class B or C licensee attending the workshop, compliance differences between the licenses will be discussed. We intended to begin conducting the workshops in December; however, staffing and design delays have delayed the inaugural event until spring.

We Now Have an Internet Web Site

The Department recently developed an Internet website for the Bingo Section. Access is gained through the department's web site listed below. The web site will allow licensees to download our bingo forms, access or download the bingo statutes or rules, read the current newsletter, or e-mail us any questions or amendments to their license. If you have access to the Internet please e-mail us at:

bingo@revenue.state.az.us

A Reminder about Summer Game Cancellations

If you intend to cancel your bingo occasions for the summer months, as many of you do, please remember to write us with the date of your last game and when you intend to begin playing in the fall. We need this information for our files.

Questions and Answers

- Q.** “Can a bingo licensee hold or conduct bingo games in more than one location?”
- A.** No. Here is the statute that applies. A.R.S. § 5-404(A)(4) provides that each applicant for an initial bingo license shall submit a written application stating “the **place** where and day and time when such games of bingo are to be held, operated and conducted by the applicant, under the license applied for.” A.R.S. § 5-405(A) states “each license shall contain a statement of the name and address of the licensee, the names of the manager, proceeds coordinator and supervisor, and the **place** where and day and time when bingo games are to be held.” Because both of these statutory provisions use the singular form of “place,” a bingo license shall specify one location where bingo games will be held and thus, the bingo licensee shall only hold and conduct bingo games at that location. In addition, A.R.S. § 5-403(E) states that no more than 1 bingo license may be issued to an applicant or licensee. Furthermore, A.R.S. § 5-403.01 describes the application process for license location transfers and prohibits temporary location transfers. Accordingly, a bingo licensee shall hold, operate and conduct bingo games only at the location stated in the bingo license.
- Q.** Are we in violation of bingo laws if we play games which are posted as “Callers Choice?”
- A.** No. There is no requirement that the specific pattern required in order to win be **posted**. You do, however, have to **announce** the required pattern before each game.
- Q.** All of our games are “Winner-Take-All”. How can we post the prize amount if we do not know what the prize will be until after we have sold the cards?
- A.** If the prize is a “Split-the-Pot” or “Winner-Take-All”, it is sufficient to post it as such. Upon determining what the exact prize is, announce it. If you do not know the exact prize amount prior to the game actually starting, you may announce the minimum prize which will be awarded.
- Q.** Some of our workers have quit because they couldn't play bingo after they finished working bingo for the night. Is there any way that a person can work and play at the same occasion?
- A.** Unfortunately, if you are a Class B or C licensee, the law prohibits any person from playing bingo during the same occasion at which they have worked. Class A licensees are exempt from this law. Class A licensee workers can play bingo even while they are working.
- Q.** Half way through our occasion, the electricity went off. Our players were willing to wait in the dark and luckily after about 20 minutes the power was restored. What should we have done if the electricity had stayed off?
- A.** The bingo rules do make an allowance for cancellation of a bingo occasion in case of an emergency. It does not, however, tell you what to do under circumstances like those described. We can advise you to take action that is reasonable and necessary to keep your patrons happy without violating any existing laws. Some options might include refunding players the appropriate amount for those games not yet played. If you have a means to identify the number of cards purchased by the players, such as receipts, you can offer a credit for the next occasion they attend. No matter what action you take, you have to send a written notice to the Bingo Section informing us of the cancellation. By telling us what action you took to resolve your problem, we will be able to respond to any complaints received.
- Q.** Can players play cards prior to the bingo occasion.
- A.** If the bingo licensee has a liquor license the answer is no. It is a violation of specific liquor law for any liquor licensee to permit any type of social gambling (including cards) on their premises. Please contact the Liquor Department with any questions: Phoenix office, (602) 542-5141 or Tucson office, (520) 628-6595.
- Q.** Some of our workers have quit because they couldn't play bingo after they finished working

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- Q.** Why do affidavits of workers have to be notarized?
- A.** It is a legal requirement made by Administrative Rule. We know this as an inconvenience to all our licensees and we are attempting to have it eliminated. However, there are special procedures for eliminating or changing rules. Fortunately, the bingo rules are currently under a 5-year legislative evaluation. We have requested that the requirement to notarize affidavits be eliminated, hopefully by the end of this summer.
- Q.** If we pay our bingo workers, do we have to complete a form W-2?
- A.** Arizona Department of Revenue and I.R.S. regulations require that any salary received by an employee must be reported as income. If you compensate your workers you need to talk to your accountant or call the I.R.S., toll free at 1-800-829-1040.
- Q.** Do we have to keep winner signature sheets for three years?
- A.** Yes. A.R.S. § 5-407 requires that what you have to report on your financial report and also requires that you keep such *...books and records as may be necessary to substantiate the particulars of each such report" including,...a permanent record containing the signature of each player who receives a cash prize...*" A.R.S. § 5-408 states, "Such reports shall be maintained and available to the licensing authority for a period of three years."
- Q.** After we award a check prize, can we have the player endorse it, then give them the cash?
- A.** Yes. Then you deposit the check with your game's receipts. This prize is a "check prize". **Do not** list it on your verification record for the night as a cash prize.